



Innovation Charter High School

Board of Trustees, July 2026 Meeting Minutes

DRAFT, For Board Approval

Date	July 21, 2026	Time Called to Order	6:00 PM
Meeting Type	Regular Board Meeting	Time Adjourned	8:15 PM
Location	Virtual (Zoom) and Room 309, 410 East 100th Street, held in accordance with the Open Meetings Law		
Board Members Present	Innovation Team / Staff Present		
Latoya Massey (Chair) Joseph Colarusso (Secretary) Callie Hull (Treasurer) Julia Baly Eric Reyes	Kezena Brown (Principal/School Leader) Tereena Somayya Michelle Ott Portia Stanley Tyree Jackson (Summer School Coordinator)		
Board Members Absent	Also Present		
None (five voting members following Yani Peña resignation)	None noted		

1. Call to Order

Latoya Massey, Board Chair, called the July 2026 meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at approximately 6:00 PM. Roll call confirmed the presence of a quorum, with all five trustees participating. The Chair confirmed that the filing of the Notice of Meeting had been completed in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Approval of the June 2026 Board Meeting Minutes, as corrected (lowercase t in the Chair's first name).

Seconded by: Julia Baly.

Outcome: Approved. The Board took up and recorded this vote near adjournment, at 8:10 PM, after returning to open session.

3. North Star & School Leader Report

3.1 Class of 2026 Graduation Results

Tereena Somayya presented final graduation results for the Class of 2026, noting that some figures remained subject to August Regents and Apex outcomes.

- The graduation rate reached approximately 87 percent, up two points from 85 percent the prior year and a substantial gain from the school's historical rate of about 55 percent.
- Of a cohort of 86 students, 75 graduated. Among graduates, approximately 40 were female and 34 male, and 57 had free or reduced-price lunch status. Racial and ethnic subgroup counts are maintained in school records and reported to the New York State Education Department. They are omitted here because several fall below the threshold at which individual students could be identified.
- 62 students graduated in June (13 with IEPs and 5 English Language Learners), and 13 had graduated early in 2025. Approximately 22 students used the Apex credit-recovery program.
- Projected remaining graduates: about 3 in August and about 4 in January, with a small number of students remaining inactive. Individual circumstances are omitted because they could identify specific students.
- Success drivers included targeted case management by counselors, CCR staff, and teachers; early Apex enrollment; use of Regents Week for recovery; teacher grade projections; required attendance on Regents days; and intensive family communication, with some families contacted every other day.
- Priorities for next year: cohort-2027 audits of outstanding Regents and credits; September senior-parent meetings; grade-level town halls; monitoring of course performance, attendance, and punctuality; strengthened grade-9 and transfer-student onboarding; and continued celebration of student accomplishments.

The School Leader added two priorities: reducing the number of students who need credit recovery by strengthening in-the-moment teacher support (noting the authorizer has flagged the school's Apex use, which is capped at three core credits per NISA guidance), and earlier family messaging on diploma types, reframing the 55 (local) diploma as a safety net rather than a goal.

Board Discussion: Trustees asked for the full cohort size for context and discussed the Apex course range. Chair Massey raised concern about recovering physical education through an online platform; the School Leader clarified that electives and physical education are unlimited under NISA guidance, while core credits are capped at three. Michelle Ott noted Apex is now a last resort, offered only when a course does not fit a student's seven-period schedule. Trustee Baly recommended engaging senior families as early as September and October with clear requirements and cost ranges, reframing the 55 diploma to avoid college remediation, and using incentives to keep students on track. The August Regents window is August 18 to 19; the last day of summer school is August 17.

3.2 Recruitment and Enrollment Update

- With school closed for two weeks since the last meeting, new recruitment activity was limited. Verified registrations stand at 36 students, including 2 in grade 11.
- The school historically sees an additional enrollment influx in August, and a further uptick is expected.
- Outreach continues through canvassing and community events, reinforced as a shared, school-wide responsibility. Trustees requested calendar invitations for community events so they can attend where available; the School Leader will send them.

3.3 Regents Results

Michelle Ott and Portia Stanley presented June Regents results.

- Most exams showed higher first-attempt pass rates, attributed to high-quality instructional materials, data-focused coaching, mock Regents, and after-school and Saturday prep, along with school-wide literacy strategies grounded in the science of reading (background knowledge and vocabulary or morphology).
- Algebra remains the top concern, at a 13 percent pass rate the prior year. Planned shifts include a pre-algebra course for students with prerequisite-skill gaps and, for students who did not pass, focusing on algebra and applied math rather than co-enrolling them in geometry.
- The Earth and Space Science pass rate declined, attributed to lead-teacher vacancies and mid-year turnover.
- The Global History pass rate dipped, attributed to the shift to a two-certified-teacher model and a lead teacher acclimating to ICHS standards-mapping expectations.

Board Discussion: Trustee Baly suggested exploring double-period or extended-block math for grade-9 algebra; the School Leader described this as a goal under active exploration but not feasible for the coming year, and agreed to share the master schedule with Trustee Baly. Chair Massey raised the persistently low geometry pass rate and asked whether the course sequence could be reimagined; the team explained that algebra is the deliberate first priority to avoid too many simultaneous changes, supported by new weekly whole-school data meetings, and outlined a plan to add pre-algebra for the highest-need students and to defer geometry until applied-math proficiency is shown. The team noted the constraint of very few available math teachers.

3.4 Summer School Update

Tyree Jackson reported on summer school, delivered at the Washington Irving campus (Union Square Academy).

- Initial promotion-in-doubt (PID) notices to approximately 168 students were reduced to 63 through targeted push initiatives; 49 of the 63 are actively engaged, and 14 were discharged or unresponsive.
- Students received laptops and reset DOE credentials for Google Classroom access. As a screening-school site, staff confiscated prohibited items (vapes and one torch lighter); parents were notified and students placed on behavior notices; three verbal altercations were addressed with behavior plans; and staff maintain hallway presence to limit class-cutting.
- Enrollment by grade: 16 freshmen, 18 sophomores, 24 juniors, and 5 seniors. Highest-need subjects are ELL (17) and Biology (14).

- Attendance rose from 73 percent on day one to the low-to-mid 80s, with a dip on July 16 due to wildfire-smoke health concerns; the seven-day average is 79 percent. Attendance calls are made after 30 minutes, and three consecutive absences require medical documentation.
- Of 14 discharges: 6 opt-outs, 3 transfers or withdrawals, and 5 long-term-absent or unresponsive. Discharged students remain eligible to sit for August Regents.
- The school is also hosting four weeks of on-site summer Regents prep (Monday through Thursday) in ELA, Algebra, and Global History for students who earned credit but did not pass the exam; about 72 students were invited, and roughly 148 will sit for August Regents, all administered at Washington Irving.

Board Discussion: Chair Massey commended the strong attendance and suggested tracking whether Regents-prep attendees outperform non-attendees to build an advocacy data point.

3.5 Staffing Update

- Instructional vacancies were reduced from eight at the start of the season to three, concentrated in STEM and SPED.
- Operations vacancies are the greater concern: the Director of Operations search has two finalists (one in the reference stage) plus four additional critical positions, with a target to fill within two to three weeks; external search support continues.
- Two NYU teaching residents were hired to build an internal pipeline. A strong Dean of Student Supports candidate submitted a performance task, with an in-person interview to follow, targeting July 27. The school is holding a high certification bar while allowing limited flexibility given the teacher shortage.

Trustee Baly invited the team to pause and recognize the year's accomplishments, and the Chair thanked the team for the school's gains, including the improved Regents pass rates.

4. Committee Reports

4.1 Finance Committee

Trustee Callie Hull, Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, reported that the committee met the prior Monday but did not reach quorum. Work continues on the PEO transition for staff and the consolidation of bank accounts from TD Bank to Metropolitan Commercial Bank, targeted for completion by the end of the summer, with attention to earning stronger interest on cash reserves. A minor stipend line (athletics and coaching), inadvertently omitted from the approved budget and immaterial in amount, does not require re-approval; the School Leader will flag any item that later warrants a re-vote.

4.2 Academic Excellence Committee (AEC)

Trustee Julia Baly reported no formal update. The committee will be reconstituted over the summer, with the year's focus and supporting participants to be determined.

4.3 People & Resources Committee (PRC)

Chair Massey reported that the Head of School evaluation tool has been completed and shared with the Head of School; the committee will meet to finalize scoring and feedback.

4.4 Executive Committee

Chair Massey reported that the committee held an emergency meeting to re-vote the budget for charter-compliance and timing purposes, with no issues noted.

5. Other Business / Public Comment

No other business was raised, and there was no public comment. The public portion of the meeting closed at 7:18 PM.

6. Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Finance Committee meeting: Monday, July 27, 2026, 4:00 PM.
- People & Resources Committee meeting: Monday, July 27, 2026, 4:30 PM.
- Conflict-of-interest disclosure forms due (SY2025-26 and SY2026-27): by Monday, July 27, 2026.
- Board-member candidate referrals to the Chair: by Friday, July 24, 2026.
- Authorizer governance session (Zoom): August 6, 2026.
- Last day of summer school: August 17, 2026.
- August Regents exams: August 18 to 19, 2026.
- August Board Meeting: date to be confirmed.

7. Executive Session

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, the Board convened in executive session at 7:19 PM and returned to open session at 8:10 PM. The Board entered and exited executive session to discuss the topics listed below. No formal action was taken in executive session.

- Financial matters (7:19 to 7:34 PM).
- The Head of School performance evaluation, People & Resources Committee (7:35 to 7:42 PM).
- Board governance, tools, and board membership (7:42 to 8:10 PM).

8. Adjournment

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the July 2026 meeting of the Board of Trustees at 8:15 PM.

9. Action Items & Follow-Ups

- Finance and School Leader: complete the consolidation of bank accounts from TD Bank to Metropolitan Commercial Bank by the end of the summer.
- School Leader: send trustees calendar invitations for summer recruitment and community events.
- School Leader: share the master schedule with Trustee Baly for algebra scheduling ideas.
- Instructional team: track whether Regents-prep attendees outperform non-attendees to support future advocacy.
- Trustees: attend the authorizer governance session on August 6 (Zoom) where available.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted

Submitted by Joseph Colarusso, Secretary, Board of Trustees, for board review and approval. Figures and graduation-rate projections were in flux as of the meeting date and should be confirmed against final reports.

Date Approved by Board: _____

Board Chair Signature: _____